

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 21, 2005**

**CONTACT: Tracie Douglas, PIO**  
**775-328-6140**  
**775-846-0066 Cell**

**NOROVIRUS REPORTED IN WASHOE COUNTY**

The Washoe District Health Department reports that norovirus appears to be once again circulating in the community. Norovirus is a common cause of gastrointestinal illness, and has caused several large epidemics in Washoe County in recent years. Laboratory-confirmed cases have been reported from the community in the past few weeks.

Norovirus is highly contagious through person-to-person contact; in food and beverages; and on environmental surfaces and objects contaminated with human feces. Norovirus transmits most easily where people congregate in groups, such as child care facilities, group homes and extended care facilities.

Debra Brus, DVM, Acting Director of the District Health Department's Epi Center states, "We're communicating with these facilities and the local food service industries to let them know norovirus is circulating in the community. We're reminding them what steps to take so this disease doesn't take hold in their facility or cause an outbreak in the general community." Brus added, "We are taking a pre-emptive public health approach to educate the community and prevent disease transmission, rather than waiting for a norovirus outbreak to occur."

Illness due to norovirus usually consists of nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, fever and body aches lasting anywhere from 24 to 72 hours. Basic treatment consists of rest and fluids. Symptoms can be quite severe in some individuals, requiring hospitalization for rehydration.

Brus continued, "You can protect yourself and persons around you from this

**-more-**

## **NOROVIRUS 2005**

### **2-2-2-2-2**

highly contagious disease by following some very simple steps. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet, and before eating or handling food for other persons – whether it's at home, work or school.”

When it comes to washing hands, you should use warm water and soap, and continue washing for at least 20 seconds every time after using the restroom, after changing diapers, before preparing or consuming food. Parents are reminded to teach their children good hand washing etiquette.

For more information about norovirus, please visit our website at [www.co.washoe.nv.us/health](http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health), or the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).